



Joint Press Release

Navajo Nation Office
of the President and the Vice President
and Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker



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Jared Touchin (OPVP) 928-871-7000
Timothy Benally (OOS) 928-871-7160

Navajo Nation receives initial \$1.8 billion allocation through the American Rescue Plan Act

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Nation received notice on Friday from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, acknowledging receipt of “complete and accurate” information and documentation that was submitted by the Navajo Nation Washington Office on May 21, which was used to calculate the allocation of funding through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds program authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act that provides \$20 billion for tribes to help recover from the devastating impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Following the notice, the Navajo Nation received its initial funding allocation totaling \$1,861,554,458.43.

“This is the Navajo people’s money and we are obligated to inform the Navajo people every step of the way throughout this process. These funds must be used responsibly and transparently to help our people and our Nation recover from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work together with the 24th Navajo Nation Council, Judicial Branch, Divisions, Chapters, and many others to develop plans and introduce legislation to allocate the funds to provide relief and assistance for our Navajo people and communities,” said President Nez.

The initial \$1.8 billion allocation is based on self-certified Navajo Nation enrollment numbers that reflect close to 400,000 enrolled members, and the Navajo Nation’s share of \$1 billion that is allocated equally among tribes. The remaining 35-percent of the \$19 billion will be distributed to tribes based on tribal employment data. Tribes have until June 21, 2021 to confirm or amend employment numbers.

“The Navajo Nation for well over the last year has faced significant challenges when the COVID-19 Coronavirus, also known as ‘Diko Ntsaaígíí-Náhást’éíts’áadah’ in the Navajo language, hit the Navajo Nation. We lost many of our loved ones and elders as we struggled through this disease. These federal funds will be an opportunity to address not only the needs of the Navajo people today, but to be effective and efficient as we build our economy well into the future post COVID-19. The Navajo Nation Council will take great care to use these funds wisely. Navajo’s future will be brighter and we will continue to coordinate with county, state and federal officials to monitor the evolving impacts of the coronavirus,” said Speaker Seth Damon of the 24th Navajo Nation Council.

According to the U.S. Treasury, the funds may be used for the following:

- Support public health expenditures, by, for example, funding COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff

- Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector
- Replace lost public sector revenue, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic
- Provide premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support to those who have and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors
- Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet

Within these categories of eligible uses, tribal governments have broad flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet the needs of their local communities. Further, in recognition of the pandemic's disproportionate public health and economic impacts in Tribal communities, the following services are also eligible when provided by a Tribal government:

- Addressing health disparities and the social determinants of health, including community health workers, public benefits navigators, remediation of lead paint or other lead hazards, and community violence intervention programs
- Building stronger neighborhoods and communities, including supportive housing and other services for individuals experiencing homelessness, development of affordable housing, and housing vouchers and counseling
- Addressing educational disparities exacerbated by COVID-19, including early learning services, decreasing funding gaps between low- and high-poverty districts, and educational services or tutoring for at-risk students
- Promoting healthy childhood environments, including childcare, home visiting programs, and enhanced services for child welfare-involved families and foster youth

“We have lost 1,318 lives on the Navajo Nation due to COVID-19. As we move forward with the implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act funds, we must work together in collaboration to ensure the funds are fully accounted for and used for the benefit of our Navajo people, frontline warriors, and to invest in infrastructure that will continue to bring business development opportunities and increase the Navajo Nation’s capacity to create jobs for our people that will ensure a legacy of lifestyle improvement for generations to come,” said Vice President Myron Lizer.

The Navajo Nation will continue to work with the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Biden-Harris Administration, and federal agencies to ensure the successful implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. For more information, please visit: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-fund/tribal-governments>.

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